SENATE BILL 817

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EMERGENCY BILL

1lr2083 CF HB 907

By: Senator Klausmeier (Chair, Joint Committee on Unemployment Insurance Oversight)

Introduced and read first time: February 9, 2021 Assigned to: Finance

A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

Unemployment Insurance – Study on System Reforms

3 FOR the purpose of requiring the Maryland Department of Labor, in consultation with the 4 Department of Legislative Services, to study and make recommendations regarding $\mathbf{5}$ reforms to the unemployment insurance system in the State; specifying the scope of 6 the study; requiring the Maryland Department of Labor to report, at a certain 7 interval, to the Department of Legislative Services and the co-chairs of the Joint 8 Committee on Unemployment Insurance Oversight and to consult with certain other 9 agencies and stakeholders for certain purposes; requiring the Maryland Department 10 of Labor to submit an interim and a final report to certain committees of the General 11 Assembly on or before certain dates; making this Act an emergency measure; and 12generally relating to unemployment insurance.

13 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,
 14 That:

15 (a) (1) The Maryland Department of Labor, in consultation with the 16 Department of Legislative Services, shall study and make recommendations regarding 17 reforms to the unemployment insurance system in the State.

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- (2) The Maryland Department of Labor shall study:
- (i) expanded eligibility for unemployment benefits for various types
 of workers, including self-employed individuals;
- 21 (ii) the costs and benefits of increasing:
- the maximum weekly benefit amount, including costs and
 benefits of indexing the weekly benefit amount to account for inflationary change;



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$\frac{1}{2}$	2. the allowance that claimants receive for their dependents; and
3	3. the income disregard for part–time work;
$4 \\ 5 \\ 6$	(iii) alternative approaches to the experience rating process, including the feasibility of establishing a new waiver for benefit charges incurred during an unemployment insurance crisis; and
$7\\8\\9$	(iv) the solvency of the Unemployment Insurance Trust Fund, as adjusted based on implementation of each of the system reforms studied under this paragraph.
$\begin{array}{c} 10\\ 11 \end{array}$	(b) In conducting the study and making recommendations, the Maryland Department of Labor shall:
$12 \\ 13 \\ 14$	(1) report monthly to the Department of Legislative Services and the co-chairs of the Joint Committee on Unemployment Insurance Oversight on the status of the study; and
$15 \\ 16 \\ 17$	(2) as necessary or appropriate, consult with the U.S. Department of Labor, other state agencies that administer unemployment insurance programs, and a diverse group of stakeholders to better inform recommendations.
18 19 20 21	(c) (1) On or before July 1, 2021, the Maryland Department of Labor shall submit an interim report outlining actions taken in furtherance of the study to the Joint Committee on Unemployment Insurance Oversight, in accordance with § 2–1257 of the State Government Article.
22 23 24 25 26	(2) On or before December 1, 2021, the Maryland Department of Labor shall report its findings and recommendations to the Governor and the Senate Finance Committee, the House Economic Matters Committee, and the Joint Committee on Unemployment Insurance Oversight, in accordance with § 2–1257 of the State Government Article.
27 28 29 30 31	SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act is an emergency measure, is necessary for the immediate preservation of the public health or safety, has been passed by a yea and nay vote supported by three-fifths of all the members elected to each of the two Houses of the General Assembly, and shall take effect from the date it is enacted.